

**“...whoever eats this bread will live forever.”**

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

**Once upon a time**, there was a Jesuit priest by the name of Walter Ciszek. Fr. Ciszek was arrested by the Russians in WWII for being a “Vatican spy.” Consequently, he spent the next 23 years in prisons & in Siberian work camps. Once he was finally released, he wrote a book about his prison experience called, “**He Leadeth Me.**” Shortly, I will share with you an excerpt from his book concerning the sacrifices prisoners made to receive the Body of Christ, Holy Communion.

**BUT**--before I share it with you, I must first remind you that, during WWII, prior to Vatican II, Church law was that one had to abstain from food and drink from midnight before receiving Holy Communion. Keeping that in mind, now, listen to this passage from Fr. Ciszek’s book:

**“I have seen ...prisoners deprive their bodies of needed sleep in order to get up before the rising bell for a secret Mass.... We would be severely punished if we were discovered saying Mass, and there were always informers....**

**All this made it difficult to have many prisoners in attendance, so we would consecrate extra hosts and distribute Communion to the other prisoners when we could. Sometimes that meant we would only see them when we returned to the barracks at night before dinner. Yet, these men would actually fast all day long and do exhausting, physical labor without a bite to eat since dinner the evening before, just to be able to receive the Eucharist—that is how much the sacrament meant to them!”**

*In certain cases, it might be like you and me not eating or drinking since this time yesterday—we would not have had our last 3 meals. Meanwhile, we would be doing backbreaking labor in subzero weather. **That’s** how much Communion meant to Fr. Ciszek and his fellow prisoners!*

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The words, **“Corpus Christi,”** are Latin for **“the Body of Christ.”** Since we honor the body of Christ at **every** Mass, offering him, in **sacrifice**, to the Father and receiving him in **sacrament** —

**“... why this special day to honor him in the Eucharist?” you ask.**

**Well, I am glad you asked that question!**

We celebrate the Feast of Corpus Christi for the same reason we celebrate days like today, Father’s Day, & other special days like Mother’s Day, Christmas Day, Easter Sunday, Thanksgiving Day, birthdays, etc.---it’s because we, as human beings, tend to take special gifts for granted. This is tragic, for we tend to overlook sunsets, flowers, friends, fathers & mothers, and even the Body of Christ himself! We celebrate these **special** days to remind us of the beauty around us and of God’s many, many, wonderful gifts.

Last week I suggested that you take 3 minutes when your head hits the pillow at night. In the **1<sup>st</sup>** minute, I suggested that you **thank God the Father** for the highpoint of the day; in the **2<sup>nd</sup>** minute, that you **apologize to Christ** for the lowpoint of the day; and, in the **3<sup>rd</sup>** minute, that you **ask for guidance**, for the next day, from the Holy Spirit.

**This week**, I suggest that each time you walk down this aisle to receive the Body of Christ... that you focus your thoughts, not on **WHAT** you are doing, **BUT**...on **WHO** you will be receiving.

You will receive the **same Christ**, who was born in Bethlehem on Christmas Day, the **same Christ**, who died on Good Friday, and the **very same Christ**, who rose on Easter Sunday!

When you dare to think about it, it is so-o incredible to imagine ...that God loves us so-o much.

He’s not only given us **the gift of life** ...**BUT**... the **gift of life after death!**

Only a loving God could have given us such unimaginable gifts... especially the Eucharist...

Corpus Christi!

May that very same, unchanging, loving God, our dear Abba, bless you now...  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit! Amen.